

December 6, 2012

Ms. Jeanne Chilcott
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
11020 Sun Center Drive, Suite 200
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-6114

Dear Ms. Chilcott,

After reading through the CEQA scoping material provided at the November 2, 2012 scoping meeting for the Evaluation of the Municipal and Domestic Supply Beneficial Use (MUN) in Agriculturally Dominated Water Bodies, the East San Joaquin Water Quality Coalition and the San Joaquin County and Delta Water Quality Coalition have few comments to provide at this stage. Primarily, the Coalitions are concerned that the four case studies for the CEQA scoping exercise are all located in the Sacramento Valley, and are all wastewater treatment plants that drain to agriculturally dominated water bodies. The Coalitions believe that these case studies would be insufficient to address issues associated with agricultural discharges in the San Joaquin Valley since they represent a single category of discharge which is specific to point source discharges. In addition, because the case studies rely on one category of discharge it is unclear if the flow charts presented at the meeting will be adequate to cover all of the various discharges originating with irrigated agriculture or the various types of water bodies that exist in the Coalition regions. The Coalitions encourage the Regional Board to identify other case studies in the San Joaquin Valley that are not associated with point source discharges.

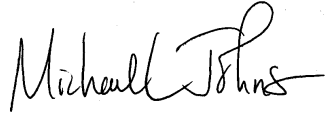
Nonpoint source discharges are the predominant agricultural discharge and the majority of these discharges are to agriculturally dominated water bodies that have been assigned MUN due to downstream water body beneficial use designations. The agricultural coalitions in the San Joaquin Valley are developing new monitoring plans and outreach strategies under their new WDR Orders. These orders require that if a water body experiences two exceedances of a water quality trigger limit within three years, the Coalitions must develop management plans with the goal of eliminating the exceedances. For the agriculturally dominated water bodies in the San Joaquin Valley, water quality trigger limits associated with the MUN beneficial use may be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

The presentation that accompanied the written material provided two flow charts for identifying the category of water body and the action taken to address the problem of discharge to a category of agriculturally dominated water body. The Coalitions encourage the Regional Board to identify water bodies in each category that can serve as case studies for the process, and then walk through the decision tree for those categories. At this point, it's not clear what the critical decisions are or how those might impact Coalition monitoring and reporting programs.

It seems unlikely that a thorough CEQA analysis can be performed using the single category of discharge to agriculturally dominated water bodies used as the case study. In particular, it is not clear how the economic analysis considering the potential costs to growers and irrigation districts can be performed without case studies that explicitly consider those costs.

The Coalitions look forward to working with the Regional Board staff as the BPA process moves forward.

Sincerely



Michael Johnson
President
Michael L. Johnson, LLC